



## **Office of Commissioner Jeff Hatch-Miller**

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TO: EDITORS, NEWS DIRECTORS  
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### **Commissioner Hatch-Miller Lobbies Arizona's Congressional Delegation to Help Arizona Ratepayers**

PHOENIX – At the nation's capitol, Corporation Commissioner Jeff Hatch-Miller recently met with Arizona's Congressional delegation about the quickly approaching deadline for the state's small water systems to comply with the new federal arsenic limit.

"We were well received by all of Arizona's Representatives and Senators," Commissioner Hatch-Miller said. "Our delegation has pledged to find the needed federal funding so that Arizonans can drink clean water at affordable prices."

"Without financial assistance from Washington, many ratepayers will be hit with a doubling or tripling their monthly water bills," explained Commissioner Hatch-Miller.

In 2001, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its decision to lower the arsenic content in drinking water from 50 to 10 parts per billion by January 23, 2006. While the new standard affects every public water system in the nation, Arizona is among the states that has the most severe arsenic problem.

Recent studies suggest that continued ingestion of arsenic might lead to some forms of cancer and other health problems.

Small water companies across Arizona face an estimated \$130 million in compliance costs. The new drinking water standard affects 287 small water systems, including many private water companies, and their 340,000 customers throughout Arizona.

Hatch-Miller characterized his meetings with the delegation as productive and said he believes that our delegation has a better understanding of the impact of the EPA's unfunded mandate on small water systems, particularly private water companies.

"Our delegation now realizes that EPA's unfunded mandate will be financially devastating to many water customers in rural Arizona," Commissioner Hatch-Miller said.

Meeting the stricter EPA standard will be difficult for Arizona because arsenic is naturally occurring in the soil. Arsenic enters into the groundwater as water seeps through the soil into the water table. For many rural Arizona communities, groundwater is the primary source of drinking water.

By the January 23, 2006 deadline, ADEQ is required by the EPA to impose monetary fines or other sanctions, including shutting down any water system that fails to achieve the standard. Unfortunately, the new EPA rule requires compliance without providing financial relief to the scores of communities affected in the West.

Commissioner Hatch-Miller spent the week of May 17 visiting with each member of the Arizona delegation. Hatch-Miller had face-to-face meeting with seven of Arizona's Congressmen. He also met with staff members in the offices of Senators John McCain, Senator Jon Kyl and Representative Raul Grijalva.

#### Summary of Meetings:

- Senator John McCain – Met with staff
- Senator Jon Kyl – Met with staff
- District 1 Representative Rick Renzi – Face-to-Face
- District 2 Representative Trent Franks – Face-to-Face
- District 3 Representative John Shadegg – Face-to-Face
- District 4 Representative Ed Pastor – Face-to-Face
- District 5 Representative J. D. Hayworth – Face-to-Face
- District 6 Representative Jeff Flake – Face-to-Face
- District 7 Representative Raul Grijalva – Met with staff
- District 8 Representative Jim Kolbe – Face-to-Face